

# **GREENSVILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

## **AGENDA**

### **GOLDEN LEAF COMMONS**

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

6:00 p.m.

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

##### **A. Approval of Minutes – See Attachment – A.**

##### **1. August 10, 2021**

#### **IV. PUBLIC HEARING**

##### **A. ZTA-2-21 – County of Greenville – See Attachment – B.**

#### **V. REGULAR SESSION**

##### **A. ZTA-2-21– County of Greenville**

#### **VI. OTHER MATTERS**

#### **VII. ADJOURN**

The Greenville County Planning Commission meeting was held Tuesday, August 10, 2021, 6:00 P.M., in the Board Room of the Greenville County Government Building, 1781 Greenville County Circle, Emporia, VA 23847

**PRESENT**

Walter Robinson, Chairman  
Jeff Robinson, Vice-Chairman  
Lofton Allen  
Dianne Barnes-Rhoades  
Annie Odom  
Kim Wiley

**ABSENT**

Steve Allen  
Joe Antorn, Jr.  
William Cain

**STAFF PRESENT**

Linwood E. Pope, Jr.  
Treva Pernell

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Geoff Suttle, EDF Renewables  
Dave Lipscombe, Mecklenburg Electric

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Chairman Robinson called the meeting of Tuesday, August 10, 2021 to order. Chairman Robinson stated that the Commission would start the meeting with prayer. He called on Commissioner Jeff Robinson to offer prayer. The secretary called the roll.

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**In Re: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion for approval of the agenda.

Commissioner Lofton Allen made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Jeff Robinson, with all voting aye, motion carried.

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**In Re: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion for approval of the minutes of April 13, 2021. Commissioner Lofton Allen made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Barnes-Rhoades, with all voting aye, motion carried.

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## **In Re: PUBLIC HEARING**

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Jeff Robinson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Barnes-Rhoades, with all voting aye, motion carried.

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### **Re: ZMA-3-20 Striped Bass Solar**

Mr. Lin Pope, Planning Director, gave the staff report. He stated that Striped Bass Solar had requested to rezone TMP #17-13 and TMP #16-43 from R1-B Residential District to A-1 Agricultural District so that the applicant can develop a utility scale solar energy project.

Mr. Pope stated that this property is located north of the Emporia Country Club on Country Club Road and borders Interstate 95. He stated that the applicant would like to construct a 3 – 4 MW utility scale solar project. He also stated that the zoning designation of A-1, Agricultural was requested so that a solar project could be constructed.

Mr. Pope stated that staff recommends approval of the applicant's request because the subject property is located in a Rural Residential Area on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map, the Land Use Plan recognizes large scale economic development projects within the Rural Residential Area subject to required land use approvals as approved by the Board of Supervisors and there is no infrastructure, i.e. public water and public sewer in place to support high density development such as a subdivision.

Chairman Robinson asked the applicant to address the Commission.

Mr. Geoff Suttle, with EDF Renewables came forward and thanked the Commission. He stated that his company was in partnership with Mecklenburg Electric and Old Dominion Electric to construct a 3 -4 MW utility scale solar project on this site. He stated that there is an existing transmission line close by. He also stated that solar projects, typically, were viable for approximately 30 years. He further stated that the land had been timbered and after the solar project has served its usefulness, it can return to timber.

Mr. David Lipscombe, with Mecklenburg Electric, addressed the Commission and gave his support to rezoning this property in order to construct a solar facility.

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## **In Re: REGULAR SESSION**

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion to go into Regular Session. Commissioner Barnes-Rhoades made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Jeff Robinson, with all voting aye, motion carried.

Chairman Robinson asked if there was any discussion. He made the observation that the landowner, Mr. Aldon Turner, had not attended any meetings.

Commissioner Robinson and Lin Pope discussed reserved drain fields. Commissioner Robinson was surprised that reserved drain fields would be tied to a zoning decision.

Commissioner Wiley stated that she believed changing this property back to A-1, Agricultural would not be the best use of the land. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance should mirror each other.

Chairman Robinson entertained a motion concerning ZMA-3-20 – Striped Bass Solar.

Commissioner Wiley made a motion to deny ZMA-3-20 – Striped Bass Solar, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, with all present voting aye (6-0), motion carried.

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**In Re: ADJOURN**

Chairman Robinson asked if there were any other matters, being none, he entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Robinson made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lofton Allen, with all voting aye, meeting was adjourned.

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Walter W. Robinson, Jr.  
Chairman

**COUNTY OF GREENSVILLE**  
**BUILDING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

TO: Greensville County Planning Commission

FROM: Linwood E. Pope, Jr., Director of Planning

RE: Staff Report: Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Article 24, Solar Facilities

DATE: September 23, 2021

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On September 7, the Board of Supervisors took actions to amend Greensville County's Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to solar facilities. The Board was presented a report which addressed the status of zoning ordinances in other counties.

The Board was advised that in Brunswick County the Zoning Ordinance sets a ceiling of 8,500 acres as the maximum total acreage of land in Brunswick County which can be used for utility scale solar facilities. The 8,500 acres constitutes 2.3% of the total acreage in Brunswick County.

The Board also considered policies of three other counties: Prince George County policy limits total acreage to 2.74%; Culpeper County is considering a limitation of 1%; Rockingham County is considering a cap of between 1,400 and 2,000 acres.

The Board was advised that Greensville County has already approved solar facilities having acreage totaling 4,621 acres. That acreage constitutes 2.4% of the total acreage in Greensville County, which is approximately 190,000 acres.

In an effort to preserve the rural character of the County, the Board is considering action which would establish a maximum acreage of 7,600 acres for solar facilities in Greensville County, which would constitute approximately 4% of the total acreage in Greensville County. If this maximum were to be adopted, there would be available an additional acreage of approximately 3,000 acres for new solar facilities in Greensville County.

At the September 7, 2021 meeting of The Greensville County Board of Supervisors, the board adopted Resolution #22-31 which refers to the Greensville County Planning Commission, for its comments and recommendation, on the imposition of a maximum of 7,600 acres countywide which could be used for solar facilities, and the establishment of a 100 acre minimum for an approved solar facility.

Below are excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance that affect the siting of utility scale solar projects:

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITATIONS**

***GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

*The Comprehensive Plan must include stated goals supported by the citizens in order for it to be useful. The design of the plan and its various tools for implementation should be closely based on these goals.*

#### GENERAL

- 1) *Provide adequate governmental services, including public utilities, to meet the needs of Greensville's citizens.*
- 2) *Coordinate development with the provision for public utilities and services.*
- 3) ***Preserve the rural character of the County by directing and controlling growth in designated areas.***
- 4) *Coordinate land use planning with adjoining localities.*

#### LAND USE

##### GENERAL

- 1) ***Encourage new development that compliments surrounding uses.***
- 2) ***Concentrate development in appropriate locations by encouraging more efficient site design and incorporating proper buffers between differing uses.***

#### RESIDENTIAL

- 1) *Encourage the infill development of housing types and densities consistent with existing neighborhoods. Promote medium density housing in urban and suburban areas around Emporia. Promote low density housing in areas expanding outward from Emporia.*
- 2) *Promote housing development in areas that are serviced by public water and sanitary sewer.*
- 3) ***Prevent the encroachment of conflicting land uses on existing viable neighborhoods.***

#### COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

- 1) ***Encourage commercial uses to locate in or near existing commercial centers.***
- 2) *Encourage new commercial enterprises through the promotion of the County's Industrial Park.*
- 3) *Maintain an attractive economic and regulatory atmosphere to gain new commercial operations.*
- 4) *Plan future industrial sites near major transportation systems and utility lines.*

### **PLANNING ISSUES & STRATEGIES**

*Specific planning issues were identified through the input of citizens and recommendations of County staff.*

#### LOCAL PRODUCTION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 1) *There is interest in the construction of Utility-Scale Solar Facilities in the County as a result for the quest to generate environmentally friendly energy.*

#### STRATEGIES/POLICIES

- a. *Utility-Scale Solar Facilities greater than 5 MWAC may be acceptable in agricultural zoned districts.*

- b. *A Decommissioning Plan will be provided by the owner of Utility-Scale Solar Facilities to ensure proper dismantling of the project.*

### **EXCERPTS FROM ARTICLE 24 SECTION 3 OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

#### **24-3 Zoning districts**

- (a) *Small-scale solar facilities may be installed by-right in all zoning districts to provide electricity to individual structures; provided a site plan (as applicable) has been submitted to the zoning administrator for review and approval; all Federal, State and Local regulations have been followed; and the system is located upon the property or structure being served.*
- (b) *Medium-scale solar facilities may be installed by-right in commercial and industrial zoning districts to provide electricity to individual structures; provided a site plan (as applicable) has been submitted to the zoning administrator for review and approval; all Federal, State and Local regulations have been followed; and the system is located upon the property or structure being served.*
- (c) *Any commercial or industrial solar facility installed upon a roof top shall submit a site plan to the zoning administrator and an engineering study to the Building Official Office for review.*
- (d) *Utility-scale solar facilities 5MW or less are not allowed in any zoning district throughout the County. Utility Scale solar facilities greater than 5MW may be permitted by Special Use Permit (SUP) only in the A-1 zoning district.*
- (e) *Utility-scale solar facilities should locate on brownfields or near existing industrial uses, where feasible.*
- (f) *The total size of Utility Scale Solar Projects shall be less than 1,000 acres with no more than 75% PV panel coverage. Total acreage shall include the acreage under panels, and shall also include all areas within the project boundaries, including areas designated as buffers.*

### **PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 24 SECTION 3 OF THE GREENSVILLE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE**

- (g) *The maximum total acreage of land in Greenville County which can be used for utility scale solar facilities is set at 7,600 acres.*
- (h) *The minimum acreage of land which can be used for an individual utility scale solar facility is 100 acres.*



## **STAFF COMMENTS**

The Board is concerned about the rapid pace at which solar development is occurring throughout the County. Five Solar Projects consisting of 4,621 acres have already been approved (Pumpkinseed, Greenville, Sadler, Fountain Creek & Jarratt), and county staff had been contacted by numerous other developers. The Board is concerned about the density of projects in several areas, the long term environmental impacts of solar as well as the fact that developers were inquiring about land that was better suited for residential and commercial development. Many of these prospective projects were located within the Urban Service Area as identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. It was the consensus of the Board that the county needed to slow down development of solar projects, at least until some of the approved projects have been completed. In recent months the Board has adopted changes to the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan as they relate to solar facilities.

The Board wishes to establish an upper limit on total acreage of approved solar facilities in Greenville County. Greenville County is comprised of 190,000 acres. As previously stated the Board is considering action which would establish a maximum acreage of 7,600 acres for solar facilities in Greenville County, which would constitute approximately 4% of the total acreage in Greenville County. If this maximum were to be adopted, there would be available an additional acreage of approximately 3,000 acres for new solar facilities in Greenville County.

The establishment of a 100 acre minimum for an approved solar facility is intended to prevent the encroachment of conflicting land uses on existing viable neighborhoods and to protect the Urban Service Area.

In the future, once some of the permitted projects are completed and are in operation, and the Board feels that they are a good fit for the community, the maximum limit on acreage can be increased or completely lifted to allow additional solar development.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the imposition of a 7600 acre limit which can be used for utility scale solar projects in Greenville County, and the establishment of a 100 acre minimum for individual utility scale solar projects.

LEP, Jr./tcp

Attachment



**GREENSVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**RESOLUTION #22-31**

**RE: REFERRAL OF POTENTIAL ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT  
TO GREENSVILLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

RESOLVED: That the Greenville County Board of Supervisors hereby refers to the Greenville County Planning Commission, for its comment and recommendation, after conducting a duly advertised public hearing, the following potential amendments to Article 24, Solar Facilities, of the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance:

- A. Imposition of a maximum acreage in Greenville County which could be utilized for solar facilities, and specifically, setting that maximum at 7,600 acres, which represents approximately 4% of the total acreage of Greenville County (approximately 190,000 acres).
- B. Establishing 100 acres as the minimum acreage for an approved solar facility.

ADOPTED this 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021, effective immediately.

Supervisors:	Yea	Nay	Absent/Abstain
James Brown	<u>Yea</u>		
Belinda Astrop	<u>Yea</u>		
William Cain	<u>Yea</u>		
Tony Conwell	<u>Yea</u>		

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing is an accurate account of the vote taken at a duly noticed, called, and convened meeting of the Greenville County Board of Supervisors held on September 7, 2021, at which a quorum was present at the time the meeting was convened and at the time said vote was taken.

*Hevise A. Banks*  
Clerk